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ABSTRACT

Dropping out of school may be laden with devastating personal and societal consequences. Actual and potential high school dropouts often face many problems in their lives, other than academic dissatisfaction. Low self-esteem may frequently be the source and result of these difficulties. This project, therefore, was intended to develop a manual for conducting a self-esteem group for a target audience of high school dropouts. The focus of this educational effort was to help high school dropouts to develop the skills necessary to become more effective in their lives and thus raise their self-esteem. Eight group activities, with instructions for conducting them, are provided: (1) introduction to the self-esteem group; (2) listening, sharing, and self-awareness; (3) self-concept and self-esteem; (4) goal setting; (5) feelings; (6) problem solving; (7) self-statements; and (8) conclusion of the self-esteem group. A discussion of the project follows, and references are included. (Author/TE)

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A SELF-ESTEEM GROUP FOR HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS: A FACILITATOR'S MANUAL

A Project

Presented to the Graduate Faculty

Moorhead State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

by

Natalie Morrow-Kleindl

October, 1990

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ANNOUNCEMENT OF ORAL EXAMINATION

Name of Candidate:	Natalie Morrow-Kleindl
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Examining Committee:	Patricia Neuman, Chairperson William Packwood Robert Pratt Delmar Corrick

Project Abstract

Dropping out of school may be laden with devastating personal and societal consequences. Actual and potential high school dropouts often face many problems in their lives, other than academic dissatisfaction. Low self-esteem may frequently be the source and/or the result of their difficulties.

The purpose of this project was to develop a manual for conducting a self-esteem group for a target audience of high school dropouts. The focus of this educational effort was to help high school dropouts develop the skills necessary to become more effective in their lives and thus raise their self-esteem.

Group sessions and activities, with instructions for conducting them, are provided. In the short term, the new skills developed may enhance self-esteem. In the long term, it is hoped this type of intervention may increase the students' potential for successfully completing high school.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Traditional schools in the United States are frequently unable to meet the individual needs of each student. Students whose needs are not met through the mainstream educational system and its existing programs may experience dissatisfaction and failure. Dropping out of school may be the alternative chosen by students who have a history of unsuccessful academic experiences. Given the negative feelings of failure and dissatisfaction, it is not surprising that dropouts may suffer from low self-esteem. Although it is difficult to determine the cause and effect relationship between academic achievement and low self-esteem, it does appear that they are interrelated.

This project focuses on enhancing the self-esteem of actual and potential high school dropouts through a group experience which encourages the development of life skills. A brief background of the issue is presented. The purpose, significance of the project, and limitations are then discussed.

Statement of the Problem

It is estimated that 27% of all individuals who

enter high school will eventually drop out (Grossnickle, 1986). High school dropouts are not a new problem and the consequences of dropping out are severe for both the individual and society in general. Without a high school education, students may typically face numerous obstacles including poverty and unemployment, as well as further contribute to these societal dilemmas.

Actual and potential high school dropouts often experience continuous frustration and repeated failure which may be likely to generate low self-esteem. Low self-esteem is repeatedly cited as a common characteristic among dropouts (Self, 1985). Although dropping out of school may be the result of a variety of problems, low self-esteem may be the key to the problems themselves and/or the individual's ability to deal with them effectively. Purkey (1970) stated that many of the difficulties people experience in life are closely related with the way in which they view themselves and the world around them. Individuals with low self-esteem may be less effective in coping with situational demands and less likely to be content and happy with their lives.

While educational reformers are currently pushing

to establish standards of excellence, it may also be essential that students are motivated to stay in school because they enjoy it, find it useful, and experience some form of success and achievement. It is important for students to experience success on a daily basis, thus in addition to being taught the basic skills in education, students must also be assisted in reconciling personal and social problems (Klein, 1977).

Most successful programs for actual and potential dropouts incorporate personal and interpersonal counseling, many utilizing the group process to enhance self-esteem (Self, 1985). One potential method of enhancing self-esteem is through the development of skills which assist an individual in meeting situational demands and coping with life more effectively. In fact, Pope, McHale, and Craighead (1988) suggest that utilizing a group model is beneficial for teaching skills to enhance self-esteem.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to develop a facilitator's manual for a self-esteem group for high school dropouts. The group provides opportunities for the development of life skills with the potential to

enhance self-esteem. Issues addressed include self-esteem, communication, goal setting, feelings, problem-solving, and self-statements. Experiential learning, inherent in the group process itself, may facilitate the generalization of skills learned to situations outside the group setting. Other benefits may consist of learning to relate to others, reducing isolation, providing emotional support, and utilizing professional time efficiently. It is hoped that this educational effort will assist actual and potential high school dropouts in developing new skills, enhancing their self-esteem, and increasing their potential for successfully completing their high school education.

Definition of Terms

Dropout: A dropout is "any youth who for any reason, except death, has left school before graduating from high school and without transferring to another school" (Cervantes, 1965, p. 196).

Self-concept: Self-concept is one's view of oneself, including positive and negative character descriptions, ideas, attitudes, values, and commitments (Phillips, 1983).

Self-esteem: Self-esteem involves evaluative

attitudes and the degree of self acceptance. "Self-esteem is a personal judgement of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes the individual holds toward himself" (Coopersmith, 1967, p. 5).

Significance of the Project

Multiple problems in the lives of high school dropouts, coupled with the ramifications to our society, indicate the need for a wide variety of programs and support services. The concept of alternative education has been advanced as a response to this diverse need and consists of alternative schools, school modification programs, vocational education programs, and counseling programs. Alternative educational programs allow for the needs of both society and the specific individual to be met by providing non-traditional opportunities for educational, vocational, and personal growth. The development of this project represents a distinct attempt to continue providing favorable conditions for success to occur within individuals, school programs, and society.

This project was developed specifically in response to an unmet need observed at Youth

Educational Services Alternative High School (Y.E.S.) in Moorhead, Minnesota. The Y.E.S. program serves out-of-school youth, ages 15 to 21, from the five school districts of Barnesville, Dilworth, Glyndon-Felton, Hawley, and Moorhead. A variety of students attend the alternative high school, ranging from students who have work and family obligations to those who have not been successful in traditional high school programs.

This self-esteem group has the potential to significantly improve the self-esteem of the participating members through the development of individual strengths and life skills. Consequently, improvements in self-esteem and coping skills are also likely to increase the probability of their successful graduation from high school. Although it was created for actual and potential high school dropouts, it may also be useful to any adolescent population.

Limitations

The primary limitation of this project is the fact that it has not been implemented with a group of high school dropouts. Actual implementation of this group may illuminate necessary changes in the format, such as time allotment for activities and discussions,

desirability of the topic, and appropriateness of exercises and activities.

Another possible limitation pertains to unknown potential barriers which might be faced by the group facilitators or group members. Barriers may exist which could impede implementation and member attendance, including location, financial budget, staff availability, number of potential clients, and specific client needs.

In summary, low self-esteem may have an impact on high school dropouts and their ability to cope with life situations and to achieve academically. This project focuses on the development of skills to enhance self-esteem of actual and potential dropouts. The purpose, significance of the project, and limitations were discussed. In Chapter Two, related literature will be reviewed.

CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

Traditional schools in the United States are often unable to address individual student differences and create conditions for individuals which make the difference between success and failure. Because of the large numbers of students that schools serve, schools are structured to meet the learning needs of the majority of their population as efficiently as possible. Brookover and Erickson (1969) stated that "in contrast to the process which characterizes the non-academic socialization process, we build our formal education program on a model that assumes that only a portion of the people can or will learn certain kinds of behavior" (p. 33). In other words, this structured efficiency means there is a segment of students whose needs are not effectively met, thus leaving them susceptible to unsuccessful academic experiences. For those who experience failure, dropping out of school may appear to be the best option.

The pertinent literature on high school dropouts, self-esteem, and interventions and group counseling utilized with dropouts is reviewed in this chapter.

Dropout is defined, statistics and consequences for dropping out are given, and explanations are provided, including the connection between academic achievement and self-esteem. Next, self-esteem and its development are explained, and the reciprocal influence of self-esteem on behavior and adolesence is illustrated. This chapter concludes with an overview of interventions and counseling methods employed with the dropout population, specifically highlighting group counseling.

High School Dropouts

The occurrence of high school dropouts is frequently misrepresented and misunderstood. This section of the literature review is an attempt to promote greater understanding of high school dropouts, the significance of the problem, and the relationship between academic achievement and self-esteem.

Cervantes (1965) defined a dropout as "any youth who for any reason, except death, has left school before graduating from high school and without transferring to another school" (p. 196). Dropping out, however, may be laden with devastating personal and social consequences.

High school dropouts are not a new problem.

Grossnickle (1986) estimated that 27% of individuals who enter high school will drop out. Nationally, between 600,000 and 700,000 students between the ages of 14 and 24 drop out of school each year (Sherman, 1987). In 1988, 11% or 4,300,000 persons between the ages of 14 and 24 were defined as dropouts (Information Please Almanac, 1990). Minnesota's annual dropout rate was slightly below the national average; however, 3.2% or 10,073 Minnesotans, grades 7-12, dropped out of public high schools in 1988. In Moorhead, Minnesota there were 32 students, grades 7-12, or 1.53% who dropped out that same year (Minnesota State Department of Education, personal communication, May 16, 1990).

The consequences of dropping out of school may be severe for both the individual and society in general. For our society, school dropouts may pose adverse social and economic problems. Fine (1985) suggested that denying youths their education and appropriate credentials condemns them to lives of poverty, unemployment, crime, and multiple pregnancies. Today's young people will be the fabric of tomorrow's society. They will be the leaders, employers, workers, and parents of the next generation and their

education is essential.

Dropouts may come from any ethnic group, social class, or geographic area and may drop out of school for a variety of reasons. Ekstrom, Goertz, Pollack, and Rock (1986) reported that one third leave because they do not achieve in school and because they feel alienated from school. Alienation and failure are well-documented phenomena among high school dropouts. Several authors described school dropouts as having a history of academic failure, behavior problems, lower levels of participation in extracurricular activities, negative feelings and attitudes toward school, feelings of alienation and not belonging, and an overall dissatisfaction with school (Cervantes, 1965; Durken, 1981; Ekstrom et al., 1986).

Success in school plays an important part in the development of self-esteem (Strathe & Hash, 1979); thus failure in the student role may pose a major threat. According to Purkey (1970), more and more studies show that students' difficulties in basic academic skills are directly related to their "beliefs" in their abilities rather than basic differences in capacities. Therefore, some students may have learned to see themselves as incapable of

handling academic work or to see the work as irrelevant to their world.

Kagen (1988) stressed that successes or failures per se were less important than the students' perceptions of the causes of the successes or failures. He believed that many of the educational difficulties experienced by students may be a reflection of their judgements of their personal worth. The result may be that individuals devalue their role as a student and experience serious frustration. It is this sense of frustration and failure in the student role which may lead individuals to have negative feelings and attitudes toward school and to view leaving school as a more positive alternative. Thus, it is not surprising that low self-esteem may be commonly found among youth who are potential or actual school dropouts.

Although it seems to be difficult to determine the cause and effect relationship between academic achievement and self-esteem, it does appear that they are interrelated and influence each other. Cervantes (1965) described dropouts as exhibiting feelings of inadequacy, worthlessness, frustration, and failure. The negative intensity of these feelings may also lead

these individuals to reject themselves, feel insecure and less respected. According to Stathe and Hash (1979), success in school played an important part in the development of self-esteem. In addition, many authors listed low self-esteem and poor self-concept as common characteristics of high school dropouts (Bowen & Lipkowitz, 1985; Durken, 1981; Gadwa & Griggs, 1985; Grossnickle, 1986; Winder & Savenko, 1970; Yaffe, 1982). In a review of the literature concerning high school retention, Self (1985) found that nearly all studies indicated poor self-concept as a distinguishing characteristic of the actual or potential dropout.

In contrast, Ekstrom et al. (1986) reported no significant difference in self-esteem between dropouts and stayers, but did find a more externalized sense of control in the dropouts. One explanation for the lack of difference in self-esteem might well be explained by dropouts viewing their circumstances as beyond their control. When individuals view dropping out of school as beyond their control, they may be less likely to personalize their failure. Thus, instead of condemning themselves, dropouts may blame external circumstances. Contradicting this position, Mann

(1986) commented that dropouts blamed the school less for their failures and focused more on their personal responsibility than might be expected.

Overall, the majority of the literature seems pointed toward a connection between low self-esteem, or poor self-concept, and dropping out of school. Although dropping out of school may in fact be a symptom of a deeper problem which has been building, self-esteem and self-concept frequently seemed to be at the core of the problem. In addition, it may be the feelings of alienation experienced by many dropouts that eventually push them out the school doors.

In summary, dropping out of school is not a new problem and poses adverse consequences for both the individual and society. Although dropouts and their motives for leaving school are diverse, low self-esteem is generally related to the cause and/or effect of this action.

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem and self-concept are defined and described in this section, and the components of self-esteem are examined. The development of self-esteem is explained, along with the various levels and

characteristic behaviors. Finally, the mutual influence of self-esteem on behavior and adolescence is illustrated.

When defining self-esteem, it may be helpful to begin by thinking of the "self". As Coopersmith (1967) described, the "self" is an abstraction that individuals develop, represented by the symbol "me" and composed of attributes, capacities, objects, and activities which they possess and pursue. It is an identity formed by experiences collected throughout life. What Coopersmith described as the "self" may actually denote what others refer to as self-concept. Throughout the literature, the terms self-concept and self-esteem may be easily confused; however, they are distinctly different.

Self-concept is our view of ourselves. Rosenberg (1979) defined self-concept as the totality of an individual's thoughts and feelings having reference to himself or herself as an object. It may not be the real "self", but rather a picture of the self. Phillips (1983) agreed that self-concept is as you see yourself and includes positive and negative character descriptions, ideas, attitudes, values, and commitments.

There are a variety of beliefs about self-concept (Alawiye & Alawiye, 1984). Phenomenologists view self-concept as a reflection of one's perceptions of how others respond toward him or her. Behaviorists discuss the "social self" and view self-concept as a product of interaction between the individual and the environment. Developmentalists talk of the "developmental self" and believe self-concept is influenced by biological growth and unfolds as one matures.

The term self-esteem is the aspect of self-concept which is termed "acceptance of self" (Turnbull, 1987). It involves the degree of self acceptance and might best be defined in terms of evaluative attitudes toward the self. Coopersmith (1967) defined self-esteem best in saying:

> ...it expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval, and indicates the extent to which the individual believes himself to be capable, significant, successful, and worthy. In short, self-esteem is a personal judgement of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes the individual holds toward himself (p. 5).

Self-esteem includes positive and negative affective

connotations, either conscious or unconscious, intertwined with intellectual and motivational processes.

Coopersmith (1967) identified four important factors which contribute to the development of self-esteem:

1. Amount of respectful, accepting, and concerned treatment from significant others.

2. History of successes and the status and position held.

3. Ability to live up to values and aspirations regarded as personally significant.

4. Ability and manner of responding to devaluation.

It is evident that self-esteem affects and is affected by every facet of life.

When discussing the development of self-esteem, two important factors consistently present in the views of major theorists and investigators are significance and competence (Branden, 1969; Coopersmith, 1967; Rosenberg, 1979). Significance is a sense of worth, and competence is a sense of efficacy. Both areas evolve from an integration of the social interpretation and the personal

interpretation. For example, individuals may observe the actions and attitudes of others toward them and then internalize their perceptions, as well as measure their attainments against their aspirations.

Because self-esteem is defined in terms of "evaluative attitudes", it becomes necessary to establish that there exist varying degrees, such as low, medium and high self-esteem, and the behaviors of individuals in these categories also vary. In most of the literature, authors compare high and low self-esteem, evaluating high self-esteem as positive and low self-esteem as negative. Medium self-esteem, if dealt with at all, is seen as mediocre or average, but not necessarily more desirable than high self-esteem.

Basically, individuals with high self-esteem may be seen as more effective in meeting situational demands and happier than individuals with low self-esteem. Omizo and Omizo (1988) described individuals with high self-esteem as being at an advantage in most situations. They insisted that self-esteem is important because it is related to many other variables that contribute to academic, social, and emotional successes.

Below is a list of behaviors characteristic of

individuals with high and low self-esteem which exemplifies the extreme differences (Clark, Clemes, & Bean, 1980).

High Self-Esteem

Act independently

Assume responsibility

Be proud of accomplishments

Approach new challenges with enthusiasm

Exhibit a broad range of emotions and feelings

Tolerate frustration well

Feel capable of influencing others

Low Self-Esteem

Demean their own talents

Feel that others don't value them

Feel powerless

Are easily influenced by others

Express a narrow range of emotions and feelings

Avoid situations that provoke anxiety

Become defensive and easily frustrated

Blame others for their own weaknesses

Coopersmith (1967) highlights these differences in behaviors by explaining that individuals' attitudes toward their selves and their expectations of success and failure are associated with the problem-solving

and decision-making strategies they adopt. According to Rosenberg (1979), a major determinant of human thought and behavior, and a prime motive in striving, is the drive to protect and enhance one's self-esteem. He suggested that with this objective in mind, people may present a certain side of their selves in order to confirm a self picture (if established) or to test a self hypothesis (if in the process of formation). Although in both cases, the immediate aim may be to convince others that they are a certain type of person, this objective also serves the deeper purpose of convincing themselves.

Rosenberg (1979) elaborated on this process of self-presentation and suggested that there are reasons where selectivity in achieving this objective fails:

1. There are certain objective facts about the self which cannot be evaded.

2. Although we characteristically elect to interact with those who think well of us, in many cases we are deprived of any choice in the matter.

3. Many self-values are acquired long before the opportunity to test them adequately is at hand.

4. People cannot completely evade the values stemming from social role definitions and social group

norms.

Brandon (1969) also asserted that human beings so intensely feel the need of a positive view of themselves that they may evade, repress, and distort their judgement, in order to avoid coming face to face with facts that would adversely affect their self-appraisal. It appears that Coopersmith (1967) also realized the intensity of this need when he concluded that anxiety and self-esteem were closely related.

> The individual is continually guarding himself against a loss of self-esteem, for it is this loss that produces the feelings of distress that are elsewhere termed anxiety. Anxiety is an interpersonal phenomenon that occurs when an individual expects to be or is indeed rejected or demeaned by himself or others....Individuals learn to cope with such threats in differing styles and to different degrees (p. 32).

People with low self-esteem are more easily threatened, while at the same time they are less capable of dealing with the anxiety aroused by such threats.

For youth, self-presentation is likely to assume the function of testing and attempting to validate one

or more self-hypotheses (Rosenberg, 1979). Thus adolescents may reflect on many different possible selves, playing diverse roles, cultivating diverse abilities, and experimenting with different traits. It is no wonder that adolescents exhibit heightened self-consciousness, greater instability of self-concept, and slightly lower global self-esteem.

The stressors of adolescent development have a major impact on self-esteem, and while adolescents may cope effectively with one transition at a time, multiple stressors at once may have a debilitating effect on self-esteem (Offer, Ostrov, & Howard, 1984). Adolescents experience physical and psychological changes that require adjustments and cause them to easily lose self-confidence and self-esteem amidst the disruptions and pressures (Bowen & Lipkowitz, 1985; Cangelosi, Gressand, & Mines, 1980).

Gold (1978) asserted that a substantial amount of threats to self-esteem originate in school experiences and that disruptive behavior is a way of coping with low self-esteem. Turnbull (1987) agreed that a major cause of student misbehavior appears to be due to a lack of positive self-esteem.

To summarize, self-concept involves our view of

ourselves, whereas self-esteem involves our degree of self acceptance. Self-esteem and the course of its development affects and is affected by every facet of life. The behaviors and strategies selected by individuals usually serve to establish, confirm, or protect their self-esteem. Consequently, adolescence is a pivotal time of life with regard to self-esteem.

Intervention Strategies

Within this portion of the literature review, various intervention strategies for contending with the dropout problem are explored. Attention is focused on the priorities and services which are necessary to meet the special needs of high school dropouts. Personal counseling is heralded as an effective method of intervention with dropouts and for the purpose of improving self-esteem.

Walz (1987) suggested that in order to combat the school dropout problem, it is essential to recognize and act on the interrelatedness of student self-esteem and successful school performance. He stressed the importance of providing successful experiences to maintain academic performance and positive self-esteem in order for students to be able to meet the challenges of the outside world. He declared that the

goal of achieving a positive self-esteem of students should be given the highest priority in every school program. Beane (1982) also believed that school goals ought to include the improvement of students' self-esteem and that objectives should relate to the real lives of the learners.

The multiple problems in the lives of high school dropouts coupled with the ramifications of the dropout problem to society, indicate a need for a wide variety of programs and support services. Alternative education has been advanced as a means to meet these diverse needs. Included are alternative schools, school modification programs, vocational education programs, and counseling programs. Bowen and Lipkowitz (1985) suggested that the desperate problems which dropouts have, such as poor self-management skills and feelings of alienation and failure, may be aggravated and prolonged by a traditional school setting that is unable to meet their needs. Grossnickle (1986) proposed that solutions lie in alternative programs which offer expanded special services and a climate that promotes humanistic relationships.

Durken (1981) agreed that programs need to

provide remedial assistance and support services, including counseling, which concentrate on survival skills development and improving the self-confidence and self-esteem of dropouts and potential dropouts. He believes that professional counseling with caring, skilled counselors is an important component of a successful dropout intervention program. Personal and group counseling are highlighted as essential facets of programs for dropouts (Bowen & Lipkowitz, 1985; Walz, 1987). Gadwa and Griggs (1985) also stressed the importance of counseling services for dropouts as a means of improving low self-esteem. As early as 1966, Schmieding showed that individual guidance and counseling procedures were effective methods of intervention with students who were failing, regardless of the level of severity.

When counseling is used as an intervention for improving self-esteem, it may be considered developmental in nature. Benson and Blocher (1967) described four important characteristics of developmental counseling:

1. Assists the client in becoming more effective in social roles.

2. Assists the client in mastering developmental

tasks and developing more adequate coping behaviors.

3. Treats the client as a learner developing a more effective set of behaviors.

4. Employs a wide range of educative and therapeutic techniques.

Pope, McHale, and Craighead (1988) pointed out that self-concept, and consequently self-esteem are made of components which come from valued areas in our lives, and for young people these areas tend to be fairly similar due to the structure of their lives and their developmental tasks. They suggested that self-esteem enhancement for young people should be focused on the five areas of social, academic, family, body image, and global self-esteem.

Social self-esteem pertains to feelings about self as a friend to others and to the degree that social needs are being met. Academic self-esteem is one's evaluation of self as a student and how one meets his or her own standards. Family self-esteem relates to feelings about self as a family member and if one is a valued member, making a unique contribution and secure in the love and respect received. Body image self-esteem is connected with a combination of one's perceived physical appearances

and physical capabilities. Global self-esteem is a general appraisal of self, based on one's evaluation of all parts of himself or herself. With these five areas of self-esteem in mind, Pope et al. (1988) suggested several approaches to changing a person's self-esteem:

1. Focus on a particular problematic area of self-esteem.

2. Look at the discrepancy between the perceived and ideal self, and help change the ideal self or the perceived self.

3. Teach skills to improve actual peformance.

Coopersmith (1967) advised that it may be possible for an individual to achieve high self-esteem by notable attainment in any of the following four areas: Significance, Power, Competence, and Virtue. Success in the area of significance is measured by the concern, attention, and love expressed by others. Success in the area of power is measured by the individuals' abilities to influence the course of action by controlling their own behavior and those of other individuals. Success in the area of competence is marked by high levels of performance, with the level and task varying with age. Success as judged by

the criterion of virtue is marked by adherence to a code of moral, ethical, and religious principles.

In summary, the priority of attention to student self-esteem could be an effective strategy in challenging the dropout problem. A wide variety of programs and services, including counseling, are imperative to improving support for dropouts and enhancing their self-esteem. Finally, there are several favorable approaches which may be utilized to accomplish self-esteem improvement.

Group Counseling

Group Counseling is the focus of this final section in the literature review. The benefits of group counseling are examined, and its value for improving self-esteem is shown. Specific programs employing group counseling with high school dropouts are presented to illustrate the potential for success with this population.

Coopersmith (1967) intended that the four major bases of self-esteem (significance, power, competence, and virtue) be utilized as a guide for treatment, and group counseling may be the most efficient means of achieving success in most or all of these bases. Group counseling is useful because it can provide

emotional support and reduce isolation (Delatte, Orgeron, & Preis, 1985). Group counseling enables a group member to experience security, acceptance, and understanding, as well as the opportunity to try out new behaviors and recieve feedback (Randolph & Hardage, 1973).

Walz (1987) suggested that group experiences and sessions may help students acquire the attitudes and skills they need to control their lives and their futures. Gilliland, Boehler, Anderson, and Johnston (1987) agreed that in group counseling each student can experience increased awareness of his or her own feelings and attitudes and develop enhanced decision-making abilities. Many authors specifically hailed group counseling as a promising, effective method of improving self-esteem (Cangelosi, Gressand, & Mines, 1980; Gilliland, Boehler, Anderson, & Johnston, 1987; Guillen, 1981; Leahey & Wallace, 1988; Omizo & Omizo, 1988; Turnbull, 1987; Winder & Savenko, 1970).

Group counseling has been effectively utilized with the dropout and potential dropout population. Group and individual counseling, highlighting the development of job skills and communication techniques, improved retention rates with the dropout

prevention model presented by Chance and Sathory (1972). Two successful alternative programs of Colorado Springs, Colorado entitled PEAK and Focus have utilized group counseling, and as a result, the Focus program was instrumental in lowering its school district's dropout rate to less than 3% (Yaffe, 1982). The topics addressed in the PEAK and Focus group sessions ranged from juvenile delinquency to social skills.

A Portland, Oregon dropout prevention program conducted a group personal growth class, which resulted in improved academic progress and a decline in the dropout rate, from 7% to 5%, during the first year (Conrath, 1984). The Continuing Education Center, an alternative school for dropouts in Phoenix, also saw a decrease in the dropout rate and an increase in student test scores with group counseling that focused on behavior modification (Klein, 1977). A 50% decrease in the dropout rate and a 70% decrease in the suspension rate of high risk dropouts was seen at Project Intercept in Ossining, New York with group counseling that trained students in social and interpersonal skills (North Carolina State Department of Public Instruction, 1985).

Finally, group counseling was also used in Project SCAN, a program for teenage parents to encourage completion of high school and to facilitate the development of self-esteem. The group counseling, which was a part of Project SCAN, was found to be statistically significant in keeping students in school (Delatte, Orgeron, & Preis, 1985).

In Self's (1985) literature review, nearly all of the successful programs incorporated personal and interpersonal counseling components, many of which utilized group process to enhance personal self-esteem. This suggests that this type of group counseling is a key dropout intervention strategy. Specifically, Omizo & Omizo (1987) used group counseling with learning disabled students which resulted in higher self-esteem scores. Winder & Savenko (1970) also found that group counseling was an effective method for raising the self-esteem of high school dropouts.

To summarize, group counseling has benefits, such as reducing feelings of isolation, providing emotional support, and developing new skills, which are particularly applicable to the needs of dropouts. Counseling is one method of improving self-esteem, and

a group format provides a successful way to reach more people. Group counseling is an effective, efficient method utilized with high school dropouts, as well as for the purpose of self-esteem enhancement.

In conclusion, this chapter consisted of a review of the literature on high school dropouts, self-esteem, and interventions and group counseling utilized with dropouts. The extent and ramifications of the dropout problem were discussed, as well as possible tragic consequences for both the individual and society. Self-esteem, with all its facets and influences, was described and the relationship between dropouts and low self-esteem was established. Interventions and counseling methods to improve self-esteem were examined, and group counseling was highlighted. Although a number of successful programs and studies were cited, there were no specific programs found which provided group counseling to improve self-esteem among high school dropouts.

CHAPTER III

Facilitator's Manual

The facilitator's manual was developed to assist professionals in implementing a group for self-esteem enhancement of high school dropouts. Although this manual was created specifically for actual or potential high school dropouts, it may also be utilized with other adolescents who are experiencing difficulties resulting from low self-esteem.

Numerous studies show that there may be a relationship between low self-esteem and poor academic performance or satisfaction in school (Durken, 1981; Gadwa & Griggs, 1985; Strathe & Hash, 1979; Winder & Savenko, 1970; Yaffe, 1982). Beane (1982) suggests that if we want students to believe they can succeed, we must help them experience success and promote their growth and development. Some students, particularly actual or potential dropouts, may need their health and social needs addressed as well in order to further promote their academic development. Self-esteem enhancement through the teaching of skills may provide the necessary vehicle.

According to Pope, McHale, and Craighead (1988), there are many benefits in using a group model while

teaching skills to enhance self-esteem. Some of these benefits include: learning to relate to others, reducing feelings of isolation, providing emotional support, modeling and rehearsing of alternative behaviors, and utilizing professional time efficiently. The learning-by-doing approach used in groups helps members apply what they learn in group to situations outside the group setting.

An individual trained in the art of counseling is the recommended facilitator and leader of this proposed group. Working with high school dropouts requires a great deal of patience, empathy, and a high tolerance for frustration. Group counseling is an intervention strategy used by many counselors who therefore would require no further training and many adolescents could be helped. Guillen (1981) states that a counselor is the obvious person who is trained to facilitate groups and further suggests that anyone else attempting to facilitate group counseling sessions should receive some specialized training.

The role of the group counselor for this self-esteem group is to provide a safe place for interaction which may facilitate trust and to present structured activities which may reduce anxiety and

foster learning. It is important to create an atmosphere where respect, geniuneness, and empathy is demonstrated. These genuine, warm, accepting interactions also enhance the student's self-image (Gold, 1978).

Significance and competence, two important factors of self-esteem, which evolve from an integration of the social and personal interpretations (Branden, 1969; Coopersmith, 1967; Rosenberg, 1979) will be pursued throughout the duration of the group. Competence will be pursued through group activities which provide opportunities for learning new skills. Significance will be encouraged by the development of these new skills and focusing on individuals' strengths.

The following recommendations are proposed to create the most promising conditions for a successful group.

1. Group facilitators should familiarize themselves with the entire manual before beginning the group sessions. This manual is meant to be a guideline. Although the format and structured activities are important, flexibility is encouraged.
2. Each group session is designed to be 90 minutes in

length. Although the agenda proposed is eight sessions in length, depending on the size of the group, some sessions may take two meetings to complete.

3. Group meetings should be held in a comfortable room where privacy, without interruptions and distractions, can be assured.

4. The size of the group could range from four to twelve members. Eight or more group members may require two facilitiators.

5. Members should be selected based on a criteria of homogeniety of issues and problems. It may be helpful to consult with teachers, parents, and community agencies for referrals of students. It is appropriate to have a balance of males and females in the group.

6. Prospective members should be approached individually about the group. An encouraging and upbeat attitude may be helpful while explaining the purpose of the group and the commitment involved to potential members.

7. It is also important for group members to have access to a counselor outside of group, should any feelings or situations needing individual attention arise.

8. Materials which may need to be ordered include:

   A. Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory

      (The 25 item adult form which is suitable for ages 15 and older.) Available from Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc. 577 College Avenue, Palo Alto, CA 94306.

   B. The Ungame

      (If not available from your local store write: The Ungame Company, Post Office Box 6382, Anaheim, CA 92816.)

The following section outlines the group sessions and may be used as a handout for group members if desired.

SELF-ESTEEM GROUP AGENDA

Eight Weeks

Session 1: Introduction to the Self-Esteem Group

Discussion of group structure

Introduction exercise

Self-Esteem Group, Handout 1A

Self-Esteem Group Norms, Handout 1B

Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory

Session 2: Listening, Sharing, and Self-Awareness

Basic Communication Skills, Handout 2A

The Ungame

Compliment Recording Form, Handout 2B

Session 3: Self-Concept and Self-Esteem

Discussion of Self-Esteem

Self-Concept collage

Dual Personality Exercise, Handout 3A

Session 4: Goal Setting

Discussion of goals and goal setting

My Self-Esteem Goal Worksheet, Handout 4A

Self-Esteem Goal Contract, Handout 4B

Session 5: Feelings

Feelings exercise

Feelings Facts, Handout 5A

Pick a Feeling exercise

Session 6: Problem Solving

Discussion of problem-solving

Problem-Solving Model, Handout 6A

Problem-Solving exercise

Session 7: Self-Statements

Self-Statements Discovery, Handout 7A

Changing Our Self-Statements, Handout 7B

Session 8: Conclusion of the Self-Esteem Group

Reports on progress toward goals

Feedback exercise

Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory

Self-Esteem Group Evaluation, Handout 8A

SESSION ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE SELF-ESTEEM GROUP

Objectives:

1. To develop rapport among group members and establish a trusting atmosphere in the group.
2. To provide group members with an understanding of the purpose, structure, goals and norms of the group.
3. To have members complete the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory, determine their self-esteem index and discuss how it effects their life.

Rationale:

The first group session is a critical orientation session, and what happens during this session greatly effects the remaining group sessions. During this first session, the leader is responsible for providing the structure and setting a positive tone, which is likely to assist in reducing anxiety among group members. Employing active leadership while at the same time encouraging member participation fosters the establishment of trust and rapport (Corey & Corey, 1987). Inquiring about and remaining sensitive to group members' thoughts and feelings may encourage

their open expression. Involve members in the development of group norms. Their involvement will help members feel that they are an important, functioning part of the group and be more committed to both following and enforcing established norms (Merritt & Walley, 1977).

Format:

1. Discussion of group structure.
   Discuss how often the group will meet, where it will meet, the time it will meet, the length of the sessions, and how many group sessions are planned.
2. Introduction Exercise:
   Divide group members into pairs. Request that members interview each other and discover all the new information they can about each other in ten minutes. After ten minutes, the group rejoins and members share the information they learned about their partner. This exercise will take approximately 25 to 30 minutes.
3. Give each member a copy of Handout 1A-Self-Esteem Group.
   A. Verbally go through the handout describing the

purpose and goals of the self-esteem group.

B. Discuss any comments, questions, and concerns.

4. Give each member a copy of Handout 1B-Self-Esteem Group Norms.

   A. Verbally go through the handout, facilitating opportunities for members to create and add norms which set up a trusting, non-threatening atmosphere. Space is provided on the handout for the addition of norms created by group members.

   B. Discuss any comments, questions, and concerns.

5. Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory.

   A. Introduce the CSI as a way for participants to estimate their current degree of self-esteem and assist in setting individual goals for improving their self-esteem.

   B. Inform group members that their inventories will be kept in a confidential file and returned to them in future group sessions for the purpose of monitoring their own improvement.

   C. Discuss the self-esteem index as not being high, low, or normal per se but rather a beginning reference point in gauging their

progress in building self-esteem. Point out that no one has high self-esteem all the time, but that it fluctuates up and down, sometimes even throughout the day.

D. Facilitate discussion regarding the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory. Inquire as to which statements piqued their interest or concern, and what they may have learned about their self-esteem and how it affects their lives.

Encourage members to begin thinking about setting individual goals and prepare to discuss them at a future group session.

6. Closing Exercise:

Have members share one thing they hope to gain from this group experience.

Handout 1A

Self-Esteem Group

Purpose: The purpose of this group is to aid group members in developing a more consistent, positive sense of self-esteem, through the use of educational and success-oriented group experiences.

Goals:

1. To create a warm, non-threatening environment where members can discuss their problems, fears, and anxieties.
2. To help group members develop an awareness of their own personal strengths and identify their skills and interests.
3. To increase members' awareness of factors that affect their self-esteem, including affective, cognitive, and behavioral components.
4. To assist members in improving their communication skills, in order to develop better interpersonal relationships, both inside and outside the group.

5. To aid members in developing specific strategies and techniques for goal setting, problem-solving, and coping with everyday situations.

Handout 1B

Self-Esteem Group Norms

1. Confidentiality:

   -Members must keep confidential whatever is said in group.

   -It is important that group members and sessions are not discussed outside of group.

   -A group leader may be required to break confidentiality in situations that involve child abuse, suicide, or homicide.

   -

   -

2. Attendance:

   -Members will try to attend all group sessions.

   -If unable to attend a session, members will contact a group leader or member.

   -Members will adhere closely to group meeting times. If unable to do so, members will share their reasons with the group.

   -

   -

3. Participation:

   -Members will be honest in group. Although group

members may not share everything, what they do share needs to be honest and real.

-Members will try to listen actively to others and accept others, while maintaining the right to disagree or confront.

-

-

4. Miscellaneous:

-

-

-

(Extra space is provided for the addition of norms created by group members.)

SESSION TWO: LISTENING, SHARING, AND SELF-AWARENESS

Objectives:

1. To continue to develop rapport among group members and establish a trusting atmosphere in the group.
2. To provide group members with information on basic communication skills and an opportunity to practice these skills.
3. To provide group members with an opportunity to share their experiences, thoughts, and feelings while enhancing their self-awareness.

Rationale:

According to Pope, McHale, and Craighead (1988), when children are able to interact successfully with others, their new capabilities may be reflected in enhanced social self-esteem. This group session teaches basic communication skills to promote successful interaction. The Ungame, utilized in this session, serves each of the objectives mentioned above. Playing the Ungame facilitates the development of rapport and a trusting atmosphere, while providing an opportunity to practice the basic communication skills taught in this session. In addition, group

members utilize the Ungame to further self-awareness and self-expression.

Format:

1. Icebreaker:

   Have each group member state their name and their favorite food.

2. Review the events of the previous group session. Invite discussion of further thoughts or feelings.

3. Give each member a copy of Handout 2A-Basic Communication Skills.

   A. Verbally go through the handout, describing and providing examples of each skill.

   B. Discuss any comments, questions, and concerns.

4. Ungame.

   The Ungame is an entertaining and non-competitive game. Group members can learn more about each other and themselves, while practicing basic communication skills. Allow 45 minutes to 1 hour for this exercise.

4. Homework:

   Request that each member practice giving compliments to three people before the next group meeting and to note the individual's reaction as

well as their own. Request that one of the three people be a group member. Handout 2B may be utilized to record their experiences.

5. Closing Exercise:

Have each group member share one thing they have learned about themselves or someone else during this group session.

Handout 2A

Basic Communication Skills

Listening

1. Eye contact - look at the person who is talking.
2. Concentrate and think about what the person is saying.
3. Do not interrupt the person, but let him or her know you are listening by nodding your head or murmuring uh-huh sometimes.

Asking a Question

1. Listen to what the person is saying and/or doing.
2. Wait for an appropriate time, such as when the person pauses, to interrupt.
3. Ask a question about what the person is saying or doing.

Giving a Compliment

1. Notice if the person does an especially good job or tries really hard at something.
2. Think of a friendly thing to say to let the person know you noticed.

3. Base it on an understanding of the person and direct it toward a personal characteristic that he or she values.

Receiving a Compliment

1. Say thank you.
2. Decide if you want to say something else.
3. Do not say anything negative about the compliment.

Note. Adapted from Pope, A. W., McHale, S. M., & Craighead, W. E. (1988). Self-Esteem Enhancement with Children and Adolescents. New York: Pergamon Press.

Handout 2B

Compliment Recording Form

Individual's relationship to you.

1. 2. 3.

Specifically what was complimented.

1. 2. 3.

Specifically what was the compliment.

1. 2. 3.

The individual's reaction.

1. 2. 3.

Your reaction.

1. 2. 3.

SESSION THREE: SELF-CONCEPT AND SELF-ESTEEM

Objectives:

1. To assist group members in distinguishing between the concepts of self-concept and self-esteem.
2. To provide group members with an understanding of self-esteem and its development.
3. To increase group members' personal awareness of their own self-esteem.

Rationale:

Self-esteem is a concept that adolescents may frequently encounter but perhaps may not fully understand. This group session is designed to provide members with an understanding of self-esteem in general, as well as of their personal sense of self-esteem and how it affects their lives. It may be helpful to distinguish between self-concept and self-esteem by presenting self-concept as how you "see" yourself and self-esteem as how you "feel" about yourself. Self-concept involves beliefs, attitudes, abilities and disabilities, positive and negative character descriptions, ideas, values, and commitments (Phillips, 1983). Self-esteem involves the degree of

self-acceptance and is a personal judgement of worthiness and competence in the things which are important to the individual (Coopersmith, 1967).

Format:

1. Icebreaker:

   Have group members state their name and the title of the best movie they have seen.

2. Review the homework asignment from the previous group session. Allow an opportunity for group members to share the information from their Compliment Recording Form.

3. Initiate a group discussion on self-esteem by posing the following questions and writing the responses on a chalkboard or large paper.

   What is self-concept?

   What is self-esteem?

   How does self-esteem affect our lives?

   What kinds of things affect our self-esteem?

4. Self-Concept Collage:

   Have group members cut pictures and words out of magazines, which they believe represent who they are, and paste them on a piece of tag board. Allow group members an opportunity to share their

collage and their feelings and perceptions of themselves.

5. Give each member a copy of Handout 3A-Dual Personality Exercise to complete. Have members share their responses with the group.
6. Closing Exercise:

   Have group members share something they have learned about their self-esteem during this group session.

Handout 3A

Dual-Personality Exercise

Low Self-Esteem

What am I like when I do not feel good about myself?

I look...

I feel...

I think...

I behave...

_____

(Nickname)

High Self-Esteem

What am I like when I do feel good about myself?

I look...

I feel...

I think...

I behave...

_____

(Nickname)

(Author Unknown)

SESSION FOUR: GOAL SETTING

Objectives:

1. To increase group members' awareness of the importance of goal setting to their self-esteem.
2. To assist group members in establishing personal goals and methods to achieve them.
3. To have members sign a goal contract to achieve their personal goal.

Rationale:

Achieving competence in areas of importance is the basic premise behind setting individual goals. Learning how to establish and achieve goals in a supportive group setting is an effective vehicle for helping to bring about change (Merritt & Walley, 1977). During this group session, members will define a personal goal while understanding that they may come to recognize additional goals throughout their group attendance. The contract is a way of encouraging each member to assume an active and responsible role in the group and make a commitment to helping himself or herself.

Format:

1. Review the events of the previous group session. Allow an opportunity for discussion of further thoughts or feelings.
2. Initiate a discussion with group members on the importance of goals and goal setting. Characterize a goal as a specific plan toward achieving something. Encourage members to share examples of situations when they have made plans, which could be defined as goals, and to describe how they developed these plans and how they were helpful.
3. Give each group member the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory they completed during the first group session. Also distribute copies of Handout 4B-My Self-Esteem Goal to each group member. Request that members complete each question except question #3. Encourage them to utilize their CSI when determining the goal toward which they'd like to work. Members share their goal with the entire group and then all members brainstorm ideas and methods which might be helpful for achieving the goal. These responses may be written down on a chalkboard or large paper. The individual

concerned selects three responses to complete question #3 on his or her handout. This exercise may be carried over into the next session if needed, so that every group member has an opportunity to share a goal and receive ideas for achieving it. Collect the CSIs.

4. Give each group member a copy of Handout 4B-Self-Esteem Goal Contract to complete and sign. Collect the contracts, photocopy and return this copy to the individual.
5. Closing Exercise:
   Have group members share something they have accomplished of which they are proud.

Handout 4A

My Self-Esteem Goal

1. What would I like to change?

2. How would I be (or feel) if I changed this?

3. What are three ways that I can work on changing this?

   A)

   B)

   C)

4. What is my reward?

Handout 4B

Self-Esteem Goal Contract

Goal:

Methods of Achievement:

A)

B)

C)

I,_____, as a member of this self-esteem group, agree to work on the above goal.

SESSION FIVE: FEELINGS

Objectives:

1. To provide group members with an opportunity to learn appropriate labels for feelings.
2. To assist group members in the exploration and expression of their feelings.
3. To increase group members' awareness and understanding of their own feelings an how to deal with them.

Rationale:

The ability to distinguish between knowledge and feelings is vital for the achievement and preservation of self-esteem (Branden, 1969). In addition, the ability to express one's feelings appropriately is an important part of communication in any relationship. Adolescence, in particular, can often be a time when individuals perceive that they are different from others. They may experience a sense of isolation based on their belief that they have thoughts and feelings that others cannot comprehend. The objectives during this group session will provide group members with opportunities to develop the tools

they need to reduce this sense of isolation. By teaching appropriate labels for feelings, individuals may experience greater success in being able to express and identify their own feelings and the feelings of others. Omizo and Omizo (1988) stress that being aware of one's feelings and being able to express them, as well as knowing that others are experiencing similar feelings, have a positive impact on self-esteem.

Format:

1. Review the events of the previous group sesion. Allow an opportunity for discussion of further thoughts and feelings.
2. Have group members state one feeling word which describes them today. After group members have shared their feeling word, provide an opportunity for any or all of the members to elaborate and discuss the circumstances surrounding the word they have chosen.
3. Give each group member a copy of Handout 5A-Feelings Facts.
   A. Verbally go through the handout, encouraging members to share their personal experiences

and methods for dealing with their feelings.

4. Pick a Feeling Exercise:

   A. Write each of the following words on a small slip of paper:

affectionate	afraid	aggravated
aggressive	amused	angry
annoyed	anxious	bored
brave	calm	cheerful
contented	cross	daring
delighted	depressed	disagreeable
discouraged	disgusted	displeased
enraged	enthusiastic	fearful
friendly	frightened	frustrated
furious	glad	good
happy	hopeless	hostile
impatient	irritated	jealous
joyful	lonely	mad
nervous	outraged	panicky
peaceful	rage	reckless
rejected	sad	satisfied
scared	secure	shy
strong	tense	terrified
unhappy	upset	worried

   B. Put the slips of paper into a small box, bowl

or hat. Group members take turns drawing a feeling word and address the following statements:

1) Identify the category and the intensity of the feeling:

a)	happy/sad	a)	strong
b)	brave/scared AND	b)	medium
c)	neutral/angry	c)	mild

2) Give an example of when you felt this feeling.

3) Describe what you are like when you feel this feeling.

(It may be helpful to write these statements on a chalkboard or large paper.)

5. Closing Exercise:

Have group members share something they liked about their behavior in group today.

Handout 5A

Feelings Facts

Feelings are not right or wrong - only actions can be judged that way.

Feelings are affected by how we think - negative thoughts beget negative feelings.

Feelings felt are often mixed - rarely do you feel one feeling at a time.

Feelings can be expressed in different ways - there is no one right way, each person has his or her own style.

Feelings are easier to describe if you put a picture or an image to them - for example, (fear) "I feel like a little kid lost in a big store" or (anger) "I feel like a red monster ready to destroy everything".

Feelings need to be experienced in doses - enough to feel but not to be overwhelmed.

Feelings do not lose their intensity by being buried, even for a long time; they must be worked through to lose their punch.

Feelings that are stuffed, must be stored in "closets" and inside, the doors and walls are made of anxiety. Anytime one gets close to the closet,

anxiety is felt. The anxiety gets better as feelings are emptied from the closet.

(Author Unknown)

SESSION SIX: PROBLEM SOLVING

Objectives:

1. To increase group members' awareness of the importance of problem-solving skills.
2. To provide group members with an understanding of the steps involved in problem solving.
3. To provide group members with an opportunity to learn and utilize problem-solving skills.

Rationale:

Adolescents have conflicting pressures to conform from family, school, peers, etc. and consequently need support in acting in accordance with their own beliefs (Pope, McHale, & Craighead, 1988). During this session, group support will be activated while assisting members in learning and applying problem-solving skills to difficult situations. The ability to solve one's own problems assists individuals in coping more effectively with stress and frustration, and can be a source of pride and positive self-esteem.

Format:

1. Initiate a discussion with group members about

problem solving. Ask them to share examples of a problem or a situation they had difficulty with and how they felt. Talk with them about how this situation affected their self-esteem.

2. Give each member a copy of Handout 6A-Problem-Solving Model.
   A. Verbally go through the handout with group members.
   B. Discuss any comments, questions, and concerns.
3. Problem-Solving Exercise:
   (This exercise will take a minimum of 90 minutes and may run into the next session.)
   A. Give each member a blank piece of paper and request that they write down any difficult problem or situation they are presently experiencing. Inform the members that these situations will be shared with the entire group for the purpose of strategizing solutions. All problems will remain anonymous unless the writer wishes to identify himself or herself for the purpose of roleplaying.
   B. The papers are collected and each member takes a turn at drawing a situation out of a box. The group discusses the situation following

the problem-solving sequence presented in Handout 6A.

C. Group members may also choose to roleplay the selected resolution. (Optional)

4. Closing Exercise:

Have group members share a positive feeling they have from participating in today's session.

Handout 6A

Problem-Solving Model

This model presents a sequence of steps to utilize when solving problems. It involves feeling, thinking, and behavioral components.

EMOTIONS are your clue that a problem exists and must be solved.

COGNITIONS are used in identifying the problem, strategizing solutions and consequences, and developing a plan to carry out the solution.

BEHAVIORS are used to complete the sequence.

1. Recognize a problem exists.
2. Step aside and think, and decide what the problem is.
3. Identify a goal, a desired outcome.
4. Brainstorm solutions and alternatives.
5. Identify the possible consequences of each.
6. Choose the best possible solution.
7. Plan each step.

Note. Adapted from Pope, A. W., McHale, S. M., & Craighead, W. E. (1988). Self-Esteem Enhancement with Children and Adolescents. New York: Pergamon Press.

SESSION SEVEN: SELF-STATEMENTS

Objectives:

1. To increase group members' awareness and understanding of self-statements and how they affect self-esteem.
2. To assist group members in learning to monitor and evaluate their self-statements.
3. To assist members in developing positive and rational self-statements to dispute their negative and irrational self-statements.

Rationale:

Definitions of success occur within a personal frame of reference. Individuals with low self-esteem may often judge themselves by a mistaken and irrational standard of perfection. Accordingly, Kelly and Sweeney (1979) and Leahey and Wallace (1988) cited cognitive distortions as a significant factor in adolescents with low self-esteem. Individuals' self-talk may even override contradictory feedback from other people and experiences. During this session, members will be provided with opportunities to develop the skills of self-monitoring, self-evaluating, and

self-reinforcement. Hence, they may be able to choose a more positive and realistic cognitive frame of reference. Self-esteem requires and entails cognitive self-assertiveness, which is expressed through the process of thinking, judging, and governing action accordingly (Branden, 1969).

Format:

1. Review the events of the previous group session. Allow an opportunity for discussion of further thoughts and feelings.
2. Give each group member a copy of Handout 7A-Self-Statements Discovery to complete. Have members share some of their responses with the group.
3. Initiate a discussion with group members about how negative and positive self-statements affect their self-esteem.
    A. Give each member a copy of Handout 7B-Changing Our Self-Statements. Request that group members complete the handout using two recent examples of their self-statements on Handout 7A. Explain that a positive, rational coping statement must be positive and honest. (It may be helpful to complete several examples

aloud, with all group members brainstorming together, to insure members' understanding of this exercise.

B. Provide members with an opportunity to share their responses.

4. Closing Exercise:

Have members share three positive things about themselves.

Handout 7A

Self-Statements Discovery

1. When my parents yell at me, I say to myself...

2. When I make a mistake, I think...

3. I can't...

4. When I get a bad grade, I think...

5. I'm no good at...

6. When my friends get mad at me, I say to myself...

7. When I try but can't do something that others can, I think...

8. I worry about...

9. When I look in the mirror, I think...

10. It would be better if I...

11. Everybody should...

Note. From Pope, A. W., McHale, S. M., & Craighead, W. E. (1988). Self-Esteem Enhancement with Children and Adolescents. New York: Pergamon Press.

Handout 7B

Changing Our Self-Statements

Situation (What happened)	Negative Self-Statement (What I said to myself)	Positive, Rational Coping Statement (What I COULD say to myself)
A.		1.
		2.
		3.
B.		1.
		2.
		3.

SESSION EIGHT: CONCLUSION OF THE SELF-ESTEEM GROUP

Objectives:

1. To provide group members with an opportunity to report on their goals.
2. To complete all unfinished business and provide members with positive feedback.
3. To accomodate group closure and evaluate the self-esteem group.

Rationale:

This session marks the conclusion of the group. Any additional problems left unresolved or undiscussed from previous sessions must be finished to provide adequate closure to the group. During this session, group members will also review their group experience and deal with feelings of separation. In order to put a meaningful group experience into perspective, Corey and Corey (1987) stress that it is essential for members to express their reactions and for the leader to facilitate this behavior. The identified objectives for this final session will assist closure by allowing members and the leader to evaluate and communicate their thoughts and feelings regarding

themselves, other members, and their group experience.

Format:

1. Review the events of all the group sessions. Allow an opportunity for discussion of thoughts and feelings.
2. Have members report on how they are doing on completing the goal they established, and what they will do to continue to work on improving their self-esteem. Group members may assist each other by brainstorming ideas for methods of achievement for any future goals.
3. Give each member a group of index cards. Request that members write a group member's name at the top of each card, including their own name, until they have a card for every member. Members then proceed to write a positive adjective or statement about that member on each card. Distribute the cards to the appropriate members.
4. Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory.
   A. Distribute a CSI to each member and request that he or she complete it.
   B. Distribute the CSI's members completed in the first group session. Have members compare

today's score with their CSI score from the first group session. As in the first group session, discuss the self-esteem index as not being high, low, or normal per se but simply a reference point. Stress that a significant change in their CSI score may not occur this quickly. Emphasize that further implementation and usage of the skills learned during their group experience may be necessary. Provide an opportunity for members to share their thoughts and feelings regarding the CSIs.

5. Closing Exercise:

Have each member complete Handout 8A-Self-Esteem Group Evaluation and hand it in to the leader. Explain that members' feedback is important and may be valuable to making changes in the group. Request that they do not sign their names to the evaluation.

Handout 8A

Self-Esteem Group Evaluation

1. What did you learn from participating in the group?

2. What did you like most about the group?

3. Which session or exercise did you find most helpful?

4. What did you dislike about the group?

5. What suggestions do you have to improve the group?

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CHAPTER IV

Discussion

According to Bowen and Lipkowitz (1985), the problem of high school dropouts has adverse effects on the social and economic foundations of society. Consequently dropping out of school also has adverse effects for the individual. Although students drop out of school for a variety of reasons, alienation, dissatisfaction, and failure are well-documented phenomena.

Strathe and Hash (1979) believed that success in school plays an important part in the development of self-esteem. Thus, it is not surprising that many authors identified low self-esteem and poor self-concept as common characteristics of high school dropouts (Bowen & Lipkowitz, 1985; Cervantes, 1965; Durken, 1981; Gadwa & Griggs, 1985; Grossnickle, 1986; Self, 1985; Winder & Savenko, 1970; Yaffe, 1982). One of the first studies on self-esteem was conducted by Coopersmith (1967) and found that self-esteem is significantly associated with personal satisfaction and effective functioning. Omizo and Omizo (1988) agreed that self-esteem is significant because it is related to many other variables that contribute to

academic, social, and emotional successes.

One intervention for enhancing self-esteem is teaching coping skills utilizing a group model. Pope, McHale, and Craighead (1988) suggest that there are numerous benefits in using a group model while teaching skills to enhance self-esteem. More specifically, Winder & Savenko (1970) found that group counseling was an effective method for raising the self-esteem of high school dropouts. Multiple problems in the lives of high school dropouts, one of which may be low self-esteem, indicates a need for specific intervention.

The impact of low self-esteem on high school dropouts and their inability to cope with life situations and to achieve academically was the impetus for this project. The review of the related literature illustrated the benefits of group counseling to improve self-esteem among dropouts. The literature produced a compilation of knowledge and strategies for working with dropouts to enhance self-esteem through group counseling. The compiled information aided in the development of this faciliatator's manual for self-esteem groups for high school dropouts. Issues addressed include the areas

of self-esteem, communication, goal setting, feelings, problem-solving, and self-statements.

There appear to be several advantages inherent in the approach recommended in this project. One advantage is that the manual provides the means for complete implementation of self-esteem groups. The format and structured activities are meant to be guidelines, within which flexibility is encouraged. This flexibility allows for the inclusion of additional topics or changes in the format, depending on the needs of the group members and facilitator.

An additional advantage is that group members are not required to bring anything with them to group and the group can succeed with little outside homework. The handouts may also serve as useful references for members both inside and outside the group. Additionally, group members may profit from repeating group sessions when new members join. New memberships may yield new information and experiences. Finally, although the manual was created for dropouts, it may also be useful to any adolescent population.

The proposed facilitator's manual has not been pretested. Therefore, no evidence of its effect or value can be promised or predicted. This

facilitator's manual for a self-esteem group for high school dropouts is meant to be a guide to one method of intervention. Certainly, a self-esteem group will not alleviate all problems faced by high school dropouts. The self-esteem group should be only part of an intervention process to be utilized by programs serving the dropout population.

I have gained a tremendous amount of personal learning from the experience of developing this project. While reviewing the available literature on high school dropouts, I learned that dropout rates are easily manipulated by school district officials who wish to disguise weaknesses in their programs. There is no uniform method of calculating actual dropout rates, since districts may collect slightly different information and employ different techniques and sources. Consequently, I chose to use the most specific percentages and numbers, regarding those who had dropped out of school, that were available through the Information Please Almanac and the Minnesota State Department of Education. In doing so, I believe that I made the best attempt to obtain uniform and consistent information regarding the prevalence of dropouts.

I also gained a better understanding of self-esteem, the complexity of its development and components, and the reciprocal influence between self-esteem and life experiences. Although much of the recent literature confused the terms of self-esteem and self-concept, I was able to obtain a clear perception of the distinct differences between these terms by studying the classic works of Nathaniel Branden, Stanley Coopersmith, and Morris Rosenberg. As a result, I believe that I developed sufficient comprehension of the concept of self-esteem to allow me to sort through the more recent literature and present the information in a clear and organized fashion.

This greater understanding of self-esteem also assisted me in the development of the self-esteem group sessions. It gave me confidence that even specific, individual problems affecting self-esteem can be addressed in a group counseling situation. Individual issues may be resolved when members are invited to share personal experiences and to develop and implement skills learned during their group experience. Although the group sessions focus on general life skills, the format and activities

encourage personalization and interaction among group members.

Finally, I was pleased to discover that many authors shared my view that self-esteem and academic achievement are interrelated. It was through my experiences with the students at Youth Educational Services Alternative High School in Moorhead, Minnesota that I first became drawn to the idea of assisting students through self-esteem enhancement. I was encouraged to learn that promoting positive self-esteem of students is becoming a priority in some of our schools.

Comprehensive services for dropouts are essential, and this project is an attempt to address a portion of the need. It is hoped that this effort will assist dropouts in developing new skills, enhancing their self-esteem, and in some small way, increase their potential for successfully completing their high school education.

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